



Pointers and questions on Paul's letter to the
COLOSSIANS

Session 1

1:1-14

Words of Encouragement

Summary

- 1:1-2** Opening greetings from Paul and his companion, Timothy.
- 1:3-8** The thing that delights Paul is the knowledge that, in spite of their problems, the Colossian Christians are making progress in the things of God, as reported by Epaphras.
- 1:9-14** This causes him to pray regularly for them. His prayer is highly practical. He reminds them of certain doctrinal basics of the faith, then urges them, in the light of those truths, to live a life of everyday good deeds, perseverance and thanksgiving.

Questions to get you thinking

1. Because of the serious problems in Colossae, Paul could have justifiably started with a note of condemnation. How, in fact, does he start? What can we learn from this about our own handling of cases where we need to bring some legitimate correction?
2. Paul mentions those three great Christian virtues: faith, hope and love (v4-5). Where else in Paul's writings are they mentioned together? How would you rate yourself out of 10 for each of them?
3. The Colossians had a genuine 'love...for all the saints' (v4). Is that also true of you? How high, for example, are your love-levels for Christians of other denominations? Where, according to v8, does that love come from?
4. 'Hope' in Scripture means the assured blessings we look forward to. These are 'stored up for you in heaven'. Be honest: how often do you focus away from temporal matters and onto those things?
5. How is the gospel described at the end of v5? What does this tell us about the popular view today that all religions lead to God and you can take your pick?
6. What is the meaning of 'grace' (v6)?
7. Look at the words Paul uses to describe Epaphras in v7. Name some people you know who you could describe in similar terms. Would anybody, do you think, describe *you* that way?
8. Examine Paul's prayer in v9-12. What exactly were the end-results he was wanting to see in the Colossians?
9. Think about the word 'light' in v12—used there to describe the inheritance that will be ours at Christ's return. What other scriptures can you recall about 'light'?
10. By contrast, what do you think Paul means by 'darkness' in v13?
11. The word 'dominion' in v13 means 'authority'. In practice, what does it mean to be rescued from the authority of darkness? Should believers expect to be petrified by 'bad vibes' from occult bookshops and practising witches?

